



## A SNAPSHOT OF GEORGIA

# OFFICE OF HEALTH IMPROVEMENT



### Overview

The Office of Health Improvement (OHI) focuses on education, heightened awareness and network development to change the current state of health disparities in Georgia in four major health diseases: heart disease and stroke, diabetes, cancer and HIV/AIDS. These diseases also profoundly affect the state's impoverished citizens. OHI will also examine other critical health issues where there are major gaps in health prevention and education among Georgians.

### Program Description

OHI contains three offices: the Office of Minority Health, the Georgia Commission on Men's Health, and the Office of Women's Health. OHI also works closely with the Office of Rural Health in Cordele by coordinating and maintaining various programs, resources, services and grants for targeted populations.

### Advisory Boards

The Commission on Men's Health develops strategies, public policies and programs to educate men on prevention and healthy lifestyles, improve men's health outcomes and monitor state and federal policy and legislation.

The Women's Health Advisory Council has 11 members appointed by the Governor. The Council educates citizens about women's non-reproductive health issues, acts as a clearinghouse for health information and is responsible for creating a state comprehensive plan on women's health issues.

The Minority Health Advisory Council addresses the improvement of health care issues for minority populations in Georgians.

### Recent Projects

#### **HIV/AIDS TAKE PROJECT**

TAKE, *Take Action and Keep Educated about HIV/AIDS*, examines the impact this epidemic has on communities. Through a federal grant, OHI participates in the national HIV/AIDS TAKE Project. On November 17, 2006, OHI and the HIV/AIDS TAKE Project facilitated its first statewide video-conference, followed by a similar event for the Hispanic/Latino community on November 28, 2006.

#### **OHI Grant Programs**

The Office of Health Improvement sponsors three grant programs aimed at building the capacity to address key health issues for the Hispanic/Latino community, the state's seniors and Georgia's females.

#### *Georgia News Network (GNN) Radio Broadcast*

OHI staff will participate in GNN's *Georgia Focus* program, to be broadcast in January 2007. The show, a 30-minute weekly public affairs program airing on over 50 radio stations across the state, will focus on the health disparities affecting minority populations in Georgia.

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## Georgia Statistics At-a-Glance

### Cardiovascular Disease and Stroke

According to the Morehouse School of Medicine Center of Excellence on Health Disparities, African-Americans have the highest prevalence of strokes and cardiovascular disease in the United States. Those living in the southeastern region have higher death rates from strokes than their white counterparts. Black men living in impoverished communities in metro Atlanta are hospitalized for strokes three times more and have six times more hypertension than those living in the city's more affluent communities.



### Cervical Cancer:

The Department of Human Resources (DHR) publication, *Georgia Cancer Data Report* for 2005 reports that cervical cancer is the eighth most common cancer in Georgia women. Cervical cancer incidence rates are 26 percent higher and mortality rates are 49 percent higher in rural than in urban counties. White women living in urban areas have the lowest cervical cancer incidence rate (8.3 per 100,000), while black women living in rural areas have the highest cervical cancer incidence rate (14.5 per 100,000). Cervical cancer mortality rates have been decreasing for all women in Georgia. Overall, the mortality rate has been cut in half since 1980, and the gap between black and white women is closing. Urban black women have seen the most dramatic improvements over the last two decades, while rates for rural black women remain about twice as high as those for all other women in Georgia.

### Prostate Cancer:

DHR's *Georgia Cancer Data Report* also states that prostate cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer among men, accounting for 29 percent of all male cancer cases. On average, 4,967 new invasive prostate cancer cases are diagnosed yearly in the state. Prostate cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death among males. On average, 775 Georgians die of prostate cancer yearly. Since 1992, prostate cancer mortality rates in Georgia have decreased at an average annual rate of 3.8 percent. Mortality rates among black males are more than twice as high as rates among white males.

### Diabetes

According to the Morehouse School of Medicine Web site, diabetes affects nearly six percent of the total U.S. population. It is the seventh leading cause of death in African-American women, and the leading cause of blindness in 20-74 year olds. There are approximately 800,000 newly diagnosed cases every year. In Georgia, deaths from diabetes affect blacks at a rate double than that of their white counterparts.

### HIV/AIDS

Also, as indicated by the Morehouse School of Medicine, AIDS is the leading killer of African-American men and women ages 20-44 in the state. For more than seven years, AIDS has affected a disproportionate number of blacks as compared to whites. Although blacks only make up about 13 percent of the population in this country, they comprise roughly 34 percent of the nearly 800,000 reported AIDS cases. Georgia has the eighth highest number of AIDS cases in the U.S., with Atlanta ranking 10th among metro cities.

## CANCER STATISTICS

According to the Department of Human Resources *Georgia Cancer Data Report* for 2005, cancer is a major health problem in Georgia:

- In 2005, it was expected that more than 16,500 would die from invasive cancer
- Cancer is the second leading cause of death in Georgia. From 1998-2002, cancer accounted for 21 percent of all deaths.
- Black males in Georgia are 39 percent more likely than white males to die of cancer.